Chicago Memorial

Democratic War Veterans Recognize Their Heroes

Post 9/1/68 *By Art Buchwald*

CHICAGO—A group of battle-hardened veterans who fought at the convention in Chicago have decided to band together to form a new organization called the Veterans of Democratic Wars (VDW).

The commander of the VDW said: "We want to perpetuate the spirit of the fighting men and women who came to Chicago and will soon be returning to civilian life. These men and women deserve their Nation's gratitude. We are going to see that what they did in Chicago will not be forgotten after all the welcome home parades have been held and all the confetti has been thrown."

"What will you demand?" I asked.

"We want anyone who was accredited to the Democratic National Convention, either as a delegate or a newspaperman, to be given the same privileges as veterans of other American wars. This would include the GI Bill of Rights, veterans' housing and free hospital and medical care.

"Also, we are demanding that bonuses be given to those who fought so valiantly to get into the Conrad Hilton Hotel and the stockyards during the last four days."

"I can't see how the country could refuse you," I said.

"The VDW," the commander said, "will demand that any Democrat who had to leave his job to come to Chicago be rehired at no loss of pay or seniority."

"There's nothing unreasonable about that."

"And we will dedicate ourselves to seeing that this will be the convention to end all conventions, and we pray, because of what we did here this week, that our children will never have to go to another Democratic political convention again."

I wiped away a tear.

"WE ALSO PLAN to honor the many heroes who sacrificed so much so that we might nominate a Democratic candidate for President of the United States."

"Who are they?" I asked.

"There is Sam Morgenthaler, a delegate from California, who, singlehandedly and without thinking of his own safety, tried to park his car at the stockyards in a space reserved for Mayor Richard Daley's water commissioner."

"That really must have taken guts," I said.

"His widow said Sam was that kind of guy. And we're also honoring Eldridge Carbuncle, a delegate from Rhode Island, who, knowing that the odds were 100 to 1, still tried to get his wife into the convention hall without a ticket."

"What did he do?"

"He threw his body across the barbed wire fence and she walked over him. Unfortunately. Carbuncle was caught in a beam of light from one of the towers and he never had a chance."

The commander of the VDW said, "Our highest award will go to Roger Klunstadt, a young page to the Alaskan delegation, who volunteered to get through the lines and bring coffee for the delegation. He was caught and tortured by security forces, but he still refused to tell them how many coffees he had been ordered to bring back with sugar and how many with cream."

© 1968, The Washington Post Co.